



GLOSSARY

This glossary is adapted from the glossary developed by the Mayor’s Task Force on Historic Preservation and available at PHLpreservation.org.



Adaptive Reuse

Process of adapting a building or site for a new purpose other than its original use.

Addition

New construction added to an existing building or structure.

Alter or Alteration

A change in the appearance of a building, structure, site or object which is not otherwise covered by the definition of demolition, or any other change for which a permit is required under the Philadelphia Code of General Ordinances.

Appropriate

Especially suitable or compatible.

Archaeological Site

Property containing archeological deposits or features, usually with site boundaries defined by the character and location of said deposits or features.

Architectural Features

Features contributing to the general arrangement of the exterior of a structure, including but not limited to, the surface texture, building materials, roof shape, eaves, awnings, arcades, pilasters, cornices, wall offsets, and other building articulations.

Architecturally and/or Historically Significant Building

Shall mean, in part, a Cultural Resource.



Boundaries

Lines delineating a geographical extent or area.

Building

A structure, its site, and appurtenances created to shelter any form of human activity, including a public interior portion of a building; a structure having a roof.



Character-Defining Features

Elements of a historic property, including the overall shape of the building, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, interior spaces and features, as well as the various aspects of its site and environment.

Compatible

In harmony with location, context, setting, and historic character.

Contemporary

Reflecting characteristics of the current period. Contemporary denotes characteristics which illustrate that a building, structure, or detail was constructed in the present or recent past rather than being imitative or reflective of a historic design.

Contributing Building, Structure, Site, or Object

A building, structure, site, or object within a historic district that reflects the historical or architectural character of the district, as defined in the Historical Commission’s designation. These resources are of the highest importance in maintaining the character of the historic district.

Conservation Easement

Also called a preservation easement, a conservation easement is a legal agreement designed to protect a significant historic, archaeological, or cultural resource through a “less than fee” interest in real property acquired through donation or purchase and carried as a deed restriction on the property. In the case of a façade easement, the historic property owner is assured that the building’s façade will be maintained, protected and preserved forever.

Construct or Construction

The erection of a new building, structure, or object upon an undeveloped site.

Cultural Landscape

A cultural landscape is a geographic area that historically has been used by people, and is shaped or modified by human activity, occupation or intervention or possesses significant value in the belief system of a culture or society.

Cultural Resource

Includes, but is not limited to, any building, area, place, record or manuscript, site, structure, street furniture, monuments, object, district, or landscape evaluated as historically or archaeologically significant, or is significant in architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of Philadelphia, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or the nation.

D**Demolition or demolish**

The razing or destruction, whether entirely or in significant part, of a building, structure, site, or object. Demolition includes the removal of a building, structure, site, or object from its site, or object from its site or the removal or destruction of the façade or surface.

Design

Features including mass, height, appearance, volume, and the texture, color, nature, and composition of materials.

Design Guidelines

Design Guidelines detail the character defining features that are unique to a particular landmark or historic district. Design Guidelines are used to evaluate the appropriateness of projects that may result in alteration, construction, relocation or new construction of a landmark or historic district.

Designated Property or District

An individual building, structure, site, object, or district, which has been designated as having historical, architectural, cultural, aesthetic, or other significance by a local, state, or federal government.

Designation

The process by which an individual building, structure, site, object, or district is recognized as having historical significance and given formal status under law recognizing that value

Development

The division of a parcel of land into two or more parcels, the construction, reconstruction, conversion, structural alterations, relocation or enlargement of any building or other structure, and any use or change in the use of any building or other structure, or land or extension of use of land, for which permission may be required.

District

A geographically definable area possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of buildings, structures, sites, or objects united by past events, plan, or physical development. A district may comprise an individual site or individual elements separated geographically but linked by association, plan, design, or history.

E**Exterior Architectural Appearance**

The architectural character and general composition of the exterior of a structure visible from a public street or way, including but not limited to the kind, color and texture of the building material and the type, including, but not limited to, windows, doors, light fixtures, trim and signs.

F**Façade**

The exterior or face of a building. The principal or primary façade faces onto a street or open space.

Fenestration

The arrangement of windows on a building.

Fixture

An article which has been so annexed to and/or affixed to a public interior portion of a building or structure that it is regarded as a part of the public interior portion of the building

or structure. An article is deemed to be annexed to and affixed to a public interior portion of a building or structure when it is attached to it by roots, embedded in it, permanently resting upon it, or permanently attached to what is thus permanent, by means including but not limited to cement, plaster, nails, bolts, or screws.

Formally Determined Eligible for Listing

An action through which the eligibility of a property for listing is decided but the property is not actually listed. Nominating authorities and federal agency officials commonly request determinations of eligibility for federal planning purposes.

H

Hearing

A formal public meeting of the Commission, pursuant to quorum, where the Commission takes an action affecting the rights of a property owner as authorized by Section 14-2007 of the Philadelphia Code. Hearings shall be held on the proposed designation of buildings, structures, sites, objects or districts and on applications for permits to alter or demolish. The formal submission of reports, testimony, and recommendations shall occur at these hearings. Hearings shall be publicized and open to the public as established by law.

Historic Building

A building or complex of buildings and site, or the public interior portion of a building, which is designated pursuant to a Designation of a Historic Structure or District or listed by the Historical Commission under the prior Zoning Code or the prior historic buildings ordinance approved December 7, 1955.

Historic Context

A unit created for planning purposes that groups information about historic properties based on a shared theme, specific time period, and geographical area. .

Historic District, Object, Site, or Structure

A district, object, site, or structure, or a public interior portion of a structure, which is designated by the Historical Commission pursuant to a Designation of a Historic Structure or District or designated under the prior Zoning Code.

Historic Property

A district, site, building, structure or object significant in American history, architecture, engineering, archeology or culture at the national, State, or local level.

Historic Fabric

For a historic building, it is the particular materials, ornamentation and architectural features that together define the historic character of the building. For a historic district, it is all sites, building, structures, historic landscape features, objects, infrastructure improvements and related design components that together define the historic character of the district.

Historic Integrity

The ability of a property to convey its significance; the retention of sufficient aspects of location, design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, or association for a property to convey its historic significance. Integrity is the authenticity of physical characteristics from which resources obtain their significance.

Historic Preservation

According to the National Historic Preservation Act, includes identification, evaluation, recordation, documentation, curation, acquisition, protection, management, rehabilitation, restoration, stabilization, maintenance, research, interpretation, conservation, and education and training regarding the foregoing activities or a combination of the foregoing activities.

Historical Significance

Determines why, where, and when a property is important. Historic significance is the importance of a property with regard to history, architecture, engineering, or the culture of a state, community, or nation. The key to determining whether the characteristics or associations of a property are significant is to consider the property within its historic context. Properties can be significant for their association or linkage to events or persons important in the past, as representatives of manmade expression of culture (design/construction) or technology, or for their ability to yield important information about history or prehistory.

Historic Tax Credit

A provision under tax law which allows the amount of money invested in capital rehabilitation to be deducted from personal income taxes owed, specifically the provisions for certified National Register structures. The federal program is the Federal

Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program and the state program is the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program.

Historical Commission

The Philadelphia Historical Commission.

I

Interior Architectural Design

The architectural character and general composition of the interior of a structure, including but not limited to room design and configuration, material and the type, pattern and character of all architectural details and elements, including but not limited to staircases, floors, hardware, moldings, trim, plaster work, light fixtures and wall coverings.

Integrity

See Historic Integrity.

Inventory

A list of historic properties determined to meet specified criteria of significance.

L

Listing

The formal entry of a property in the local, state, or National Register of Historic Places; also referred to as designation, certification, or registration.

M

Maintain

To keep in an existing state of preservation or repair.

Mortar

A substance used to bind stone, brick, and other masonry units together. It is applied as a paste and hardens as it dries (cures). Lime was the primary binder in older mortars while Portland cement has been a common binder since the early 20th century. Historic buildings in Philadelphia usually require a repointing mortar that contains both lime and Portland cement.

Mothball (Stabilization)

Temporarily closing or stabilizing a building to protect it from the weather as well as to secure it from vandalism; the act or process of applying measures essential to the maintenance of a deteriorated building as it exists at present, establishing structural stability and a weather-resistant enclosure.

Mural

A painting, picture or decoration applied, executed on or affixed to a wall.

N

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)

(42 United States Code 4321- 4347). NEPA established a review and assessment process for federally funded or license projects with the potential to render adverse environmental impacts, including historic properties.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470-470t), as amended. Established the National Register of Historic Places program and extended national historic preservation programs to properties of state and local significance.

National Register of Historic Places

The official inventory of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architectural, archeology and culture, maintained by the Secretary of Interior under the authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (amended) (16 U.S.C. 470-470+, 36 C.F.R. Sections 60, 63).

National Register Criteria

The federally established standards for evaluating the eligibility of properties for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Nomination

Official recommendation for listing a property on the local, state, or National Register of Historic Places.

Nomination Form

A standard document used to nominate a building, structure, site, or object.

Non-Contributing Building, Structure, Site, or Object

A building, structure, site, or object within a district that does not reflect the historical or architectural character of the district as defined in the designation.

O**Obscured**

Covered, concealed, or hidden from view.

P**Period of Significance**

The length of time when a property was associated with important events, activities, or person, or attained the characteristics which qualify it for National Register listing. Period of significance usually begins with a date when significant activities or events began giving the property its historic significance; this is often a date of construction. For prehistoric properties, the period of significance is the broad span of time about which the site or district is likely to provide information; it is often the period associated with a particular cultural group.

Portland cement

A strong, inflexible hydraulic cement used to bind mortar. Mortar or patching materials with a high Portland cement content should not be used on pre-1920 buildings. The Portland cement is harder than the masonry, thereby causing serious damage over annual freeze-thaw cycles.

Preservation

The act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally relies upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

Preservation Planning

A series of activities through which goals, priorities and

strategies for identification, evaluation, registration and protection of historic properties are developed, set forth and carried out.

Property Type

A grouping of individual properties based on a set of shared physical or associative characteristics.

R**Reconstruction**

The act or process of reproducing by new construction the exact form and detail of a vanished building, structure, or object, or any part thereof, as it appeared at a specific period of time.

Refurbish

To renovate, or make clean, fresh, or functional again through a process of major maintenance or minor repair.

Registration

See Listing.

Rehabilitation

The act or process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration that makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions or features of the property which are significant to its historical, architectural, and cultural value.

Remodel

To change a building without regard to its distinctive features or style, such as altering the appearance of a structure by removing or covering original details and substituting new materials and forms.

Renovate

To repair a structure and make it usable again, without attempting to restore its historic appearance or duplicate original construction methods or material.

Repair

Acts of ordinary maintenance that do not include a change in the design, material, form, or outer appearance of a resource, such as repainting. This includes methods of stabilizing and preventing further decay and may incorporate replacement in kind or refurbishment of materials on a building or structure.

Replication

Constructing a building so that it is an exact replica or imitation of an historic architectural style or period.

Repointing

Repair or fill in the external mortar joints of masonry construction.

Residential Building

A building used for household living.

Restoration

The act or process of accurately recovering the form and details of a property and its setting as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of later work or by the replacement of missing earlier work. It is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other coderequired work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project.

Retain

To keep secure and intact. In the guidelines, “retain” and “maintain” describe the act of keeping an element, detail, or structure and continuing the same level of repair to aid in the preservation of elements, sites and structures.

Rhythm

Regular occurrence of elements or features such as spacing between buildings.

S**Scale**

Proportional elements that demonstrate the size, materials, and style of buildings.

Significance

See Historical Significance.

Significant Building, Structure, Site, or Object

A building, structure, site, or object within a district that warrants individual listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

under the criteria established in Section 14-2007(5)(a)-(j) of the Philadelphia Code.

Site

The location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure—whether standing or vanished—where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure. Examples include a battlefield, campsite, designed landscape, shipwreck, ruins of a building or structure, natural feature, trail, rock carvings, or ceremonial site.

Stabilization

Is defined as the act or process of applying measures to sustain the existing form, integrity, and material of a building or structure, and the existing form and vegetative cover of a site. It may include initial stabilization work, where necessary, as well as ongoing maintenance of the historic building materials. Also see Mothball.

Street

A strip of land, including the right-of-way, confirmed upon the City Plan, intended for use as a means of vehicular and/or pedestrian traffic, but not including limited access highways.

Streetscape

The distinguishing character of a particular street as created by its width, degree of curvature, paving materials, design of the street furniture, and forms of surrounding buildings.

Structure

A work made up of interdependent and interrelated parts in a definite pattern of organization constructed by man and affixed to real property, including a public interior portion of a structure; any type or form of construction above the ground.

Style

A type of architecture distinguished by special characteristics of structure and ornament and often related in time; also, a general quality of a distinctive character.

V**Vernacular**

A regional form or adaptation of an architectural style.